

PROJ 50.02.12

[ENTER DATE]

Colonel Alfred A. Pantano
District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32207-8175

Dear Colonel Pantano:

Subject: Letter of Support for the Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants – Implement Biological Controls Final Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Assessment (PIR/EA)

The purpose of this letter is to express the South Florida Water Management District's support for the Final Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Assessment (PIR/EA) for Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants – Implement Biological Controls, dated August 2009.

Biological control is the purposeful introduction of natural enemies, usually insects, as a means to weaken and suppress invading plants. The Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants – Implement Biological Controls Project includes the mass-rearing, field release, establishment and field monitoring of approved biological control agents for melaleuca and other invasive exotic species.

The PIR/EA recommends two plans for the control of melaleuca, Australian pine, Brazilian pepper and Old World climbing fern, and the construction of a mass-rearing annex. These plans are based upon varying release strategies for the biological control agents.

The Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants – Implement Biological Controls Project is a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), which was authorized by Congress in Section 601 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides the opportunity to accelerate construction of a mass-rearing annex to the existing Fiscal Year 2010, allowing benefits to be received earlier. This project's programmatic authority under WRDA 2000 allows for Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works approval without having to go to Congress for authorization.

We are pleased to have completed the PIR/EA phase of the project and look forward to project implementation.

This letter, while not legally binding on the South Florida Water Management District, voices our support for the Final PIR/EA for the Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants – Implement Biological Controls Project.

The South Florida Water Management District is proud to share a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on this important project.

Sincerely,

Carol Ann Wehle
Executive Director

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